

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

LARRY BELL
President
c/o New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
#1 Wildlife Way
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507
(505)-476-8008

LARRY L. KRUCKENBERG
Secretary/Treasurer
c/o Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82006
(307) 777-4569

JEFF KOENINGS
First Vice President
Olympia, WA

ROD SANDO
Second Vice President
Boise, ID

MORLEY BARRETT
Third Vice President
Edmonton, ALTA

August 9, 2001

Scott Smith
Chairman, Western Regional Panel
Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091

RECEIVED

AUG 14 2001

WDFW
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Mr. Smith:

I appreciate the briefing you provided to the western Fish Chiefs assembled at the Association's annual meeting in Park City, Utah, in mid-July. Allow me to reinforce the confidence and support the Association places in the Western Regional Panel and the Task Force. The guidance and coordination provided by the Panel is very important to our member fish and wildlife agencies.

I have urged our member states to participate in the upcoming Western Regional Panel meeting this September, in Las Vegas. I know it is increasingly difficult for state agency personnel to travel outside their home states and unfortunately, difficult choices have to be made about which regional activities merit participation. All our members share your dedication to conserving our fish and wildlife resources through prudent prevention and control of invasion from undesirable nuisance species, and I believe this forum is going to provide an important opportunity for regional coordination and action planning in this regard.

Another important issue that you and our membership will need to address in the coming year is the reauthorization of the National Invasive Species Act (NISA). This Association worked closely with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Invasive Species Council and its Advisory Committee in the development of a National Invasive Species Management Plan. That was very important work and we believe there is merit in the resulting plan. Again, I have urged our member agencies to carefully review proposals for reauthorization and, based upon that review, lend their support to reauthorization.

There are elements that we will be looking for in reauthorization language for the NISA. It is critical that the Act recognize not all nonnative species are *de facto* invasive. Many nonnative species are productively utilized for many aspects of our culture. We are cautious about elements of the Act that are inappropriately interpreted to suggest that wildlife management activities – such as recreational fisheries management – present nuisance or invasive species risks. We believe that emphasis should be placed upon prevention of invasion by acknowledged invasive species, interdiction of pathways for unintentional invasions, and control or management of existing nuisance species. These kinds of activities are rarely a component of existing financing strategies for wildlife management and we will be very supportive of opportunities for enhanced, cooperative financing for nuisance species planning assistance and plan implementation. As was aired in your

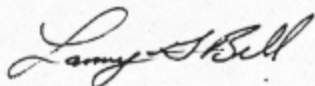
ALASKA • ALBERTA • ARIZONA • BRITISH COLUMBIA • CALIFORNIA • COLORADO • HAWAII • IDAHO • MONTANA • NEBRASKA • NEVADA
NEW MEXICO • NORTH DAKOTA • OREGON • SASKATCHEWAN • SOUTH DAKOTA • TEXAS • UTAH • WASHINGTON • WYOMING • YUKON

Representing member Fish and Wildlife Agencies since 1922

meeting with the Fish Chiefs a few weeks ago, current funding is targeted at plan implementation, but aquatic nuisance species planning assistance is not eligible. This leaves states in a lurch for actual plan development. We believe that reauthorization of NISA must take up enhanced opportunity for planning assistance to the states, and enhanced funding for both planning and plan implementation.

Again, thank you for joining us at our recent annual meeting. We look forward to working closely with you in the future through the Western Regional Panel and in our work towards reauthorization of an improved National Invasive Species Act.

Sincerely,



Larry Bell
WAFWA President

LB/LLK:lmr

cc: WAFWA Members
Max Peterson, IAFWA
IAFWA Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee
IAFWA International Relations Committee